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preservation.⁵ The question must be settled otherwise. An examination of the contents of these opening verses soon points to the fact that *Sir Orfeo* is the poem where they belong by right. Let us suppose, for argument's sake, that they were written by the author of the *Lay le Freine*. How did he happen upon them? Clearly he could not have taken them from his original, where the tale is preceded only by two verses of rather vague import.⁶ On the other hand, the information they give us was borrowed—as was long ago shown by Zupitza—from the prologues or conclusions of several of Marie's lays. How are we to understand this? Did Zupitza mean that the English poet got his hints himself out of Marie? In that case, we should picture him to ourselves as a presumably faithful translator in the tale proper but as a somewhat laborious compiler in the introduction to the tale. The supposition is of course possible, but not very probable. Or are we not rather to admit that the work of compilation, such as it was, was done by a French poet and that the author of *Sir Orfeo* translated his preface as well as his tale? We must take into account that the prologue of *Sir Orfeo*—by the nature and the extent of the information it gives—stands alone⁷ in middle English literature. But French literature of the thirteenth century provides us with quite a number of parallels. It is enough here to mention the prologues of *Doon*, *Tydorel*, and the whole *lai du Lecheor*. It is therefore most likely that their English counterpart at the beginning of *Sir Orfeo* was itself a pretty literal translation from the French; as Marie's *Le Fraisne* contains nothing of the sort, it must have opened the French *lai d'Orphée*. It must be noted that the closing lines of *Sir Orfeo*—presumably translated from the French like the rest—are quite in keeping with the prologue.⁸

⁵ Cf. Kittredge, p. 176, n. 2, and Zielke, p. 22.

⁶ *Le lai del Fraisne vus dirai | sulunc le cunte que jeo sai.*

⁷ With the exception of the *Franklin's Tale*. But it is not absurd to suppose that Chaucer had the opening lines of *Sir Orfeo* in mind when he wrote his own prologue to the *Franklin's Tale*. I hope to come back to this point in a subsequent paper.

⁸ LL. 595-600: "Harpours in Bretaine afterþan | Herd, hou þis mervaille bigan, | And made herof a lay of gode

Provided with that introduction which we are thus led to assign to it, the French *lai d'Orphée* appears in a rather new light. It reveals itself to us at once as one of the younger lais, belonging to the second or the third generation.⁹ It was of course only after Marie's work was done that later poets could turn to her for information; and we shall see a little further on that it was not even till the collection of the French lays, such as we know it, was nearly complete that the prologue of *Orphée* could have been written. It was then composed at a time when there was a good deal of talk about, but very little knowledge of, the old Bretons; most of the writers of lais confined themselves to rehandling themes already treated by Marie.¹⁰ Between an introduction and a conclusion closely modeled on her prologues and epilogues, clever but unimaginative *jongleurs* would insert a story that sometimes was also taken from Marie, sometimes borrowed from quite a different source. So in *Doon* a tale of Eastern origin was fused with a legend which on examination proves to be nothing else but that of *Milun*; the result of that most artificial fusion was called by its proud author a lai. The author of *Havelock* took bodily out of Gaimar's chronicle a rather lengthy passage narrating a fine old legend; he slightly modified it, and, adorning it with a prologue and a conclusion in the style and at times the phraseology of Marie, he forthwith launched into the world, at the beginning of the thirteenth century, a new Breton lai, as genuine as many others of the same time. Just in the same manner, we may suppose, the author of *Orphée* rehandled a Classic myth and worked it over into a lai. But for ingenuity and knowledge of the technique of his trade, he was certainly far above

likeing | And nempned it after þe king : þat lay Orfeo is yhote, | Gode is þe lay, swete is þe note." Cf. *Guigemar*, 883-886; *Graelent*, 3-4. Cf. G. Paris, *Hist. Litt. de la France*, xxix, 500-501.

⁹ I agree with Prof. Kittredge (see pp. 180-182) that the passages often cited from the *Lai de l'Espine* (ll. 180-185) and *Floire et Blanceflor* (ed. Du Ménil, p. 231), have nothing to do with the French original of *Sir Orfeo*, although I cannot think that they refer us to a genuine Breton lay.

¹⁰ For all that concerns the so-called anonymous Lais and their attitude towards Marie, see *Zts. f. rom. Phil.*, xxix, 19 ff.

the usual run of the thirteenth century lay-writers; his adaptation is so clever that, had he not retained the Classical names, it might have been difficult to prove his acquaintance with the Classic tale.¹¹ There is little doubt that the adaptation was his own work; he wrote at too late a day for us to be able to assume that he drew on a Breton original. Was he nevertheless influenced, in his work of rehandling, by Celtic legends more or less similar to the Classic myth, which were known to him in a French form now lost?¹² Or did he simply turn for the colouring and the new matter he wanted to the Arthurian romances or the *romans d'aventure* of his own time, and thus apply to the tale itself very much the same method as to the introduction?¹³ I feel rather inclined to adopt the second solution, but in the absence of quite conclusive evidence one way or the other, it is perhaps wiser to leave the question undecided.

In returning to the Prologue, we tread upon safer ground, for in this case we have both the copy (in its English translation) and the original (Marie). Let us not look here for genuine and accurate information on the Breton Lais; in the thirteenth century the Bretons had for a long time ceased to be very distinct figures, and the memory of them grew every day dimmer. In so

far as they were represented as makers of Lays, that memory was mainly kept up by a literary tradition which went back to Marie; the chief interest of the introductions to the thirteenth century Lays lies in that they allow us to form an idea as to how that tradition developed or in other terms how readers of that time understood Marie and the somewhat obscure indications of her prologues. The text of our prologue is rather uncertain; the three manuscripts, H, O and F¹⁴ have different readings for almost every line, and although the variations are mostly very slight they are not always so. For ll. 1-4 it is obvious that H and F present the best reading; O modified rather clumsily the original text, without, it is true, greatly altering the meaning. Ll. 5-12: here the three manuscripts are in almost complete agreement. In the following lines, variations are more significant; let us, for instance, compare H and F:

H.	F.
13 In Brytain þis layes arne ywryte, Furst yfounde and forþe ygete, Of adventures þat fillen by dayes Wherof Brytouns made her layes,	13 In Breteyne bi hold time This layes were wrought, so seith this rime. When kinges might our yhere Of ani mervailles that ther were,
17 When þey myght owher heryn Of adventures þat þer weryn, þey toke her harpys wiþ game, Maden layes and ȝaf it name.	17 Thai token an harp in gle and game, And maked a lay and ȝaf it name.

Which of the two gives the best reading? To be sure, one might contend that although the two texts are somewhat different the meaning is substantially the same. It is possible that by the lays which are 'written' in Brittany, H simply means the songs that were composed on the occasion of the 'adventures' and to which another reference is made and—awkwardly enough—a third one in lines 19 and 20. In that case then,

¹⁴ H (Harleian ms.), O (Bodleian ms.), F (Lay le Freine preserved only in the Auchinleck ms.). The Auchinleck ms. of *Sir Orfeo* lacks the introduction. Cf. Zielke, 22 ff., and Varnhagen, *Anglia*, III, 415.

¹¹ Cp. Zielke, p. 4.

¹² Prof. Kittredge admits the existence of a Breton lay which the French translator probably rendered without much change. But his main thesis—namely, that we have to do here with an adaptation of the Ovidian story to Celtic beliefs and traditions—is not absolutely bound up, it seems to me, with the assertion that there ever existed such a lay. Even Marie, in my opinion, can hardly be shown to have had access to 'Breton lays.' And yet some of her stories which she got from French written sources or by word of mouth from French *jongleurs*, undoubtedly go back to Celtic traditions. The case might be the same with the author of *Orphée*.

¹³ Cf. Zielke, *Sir Orfeo*, p. 137: Vieles von dem beiwerke, mit dem der dichter seine romanze geschmückt hat, kehrt in der weltliteratur jener zeit wieder. So erinnert uns die scene der thronentsagung an Guillaume d'Angleterre: das traurige Leben, welches Orfeo im walde führt, an Iwein und Parthenopeus; die ausstattung des feenschlosses an Beves und Flandrijs; die aufforderung des feenkönigs an Orfeo, sich den lohn für seine kunst selbst zu bestimmen, an Tristan, [Cf. Kittredge, p. 188]; das wechseln der kleider an Horn, William of Palerne und Beves.

there would seem to be almost a contradiction between lines 13-14 and lines 19-20. The process of composition denoted by lines 19-20 hardly implies a writing down of the songs, in fact, seems to exclude the idea of it. But it is far more likely that the scribe of H got here a little confused; having in his mind the tale of Orfeo which he was making ready to copy he imagined—in a probably obscure and rather unconscious manner—the Breton lays to be at once and at the same time, songs sung to the harp and narrative poems written for the enjoyment of a reading public. But was this the idea of the English author of our prologue? That does not seem probable in this passage at least. He does not say that he is going to tell us a lay, but only to relate one of those ‘adventures’ in memory of which the Bretons used to make lays.

21 Of adventures, þat han befallē,
Y can sum telle, but nought all.
Herken, lordyngs, þat ben trewe,
And y wol þou telle of Sir Orphewe.

Cf. F:

Now of this aventours that weren yfalle
Y can tel sum, ac nought alle. (ll. 18-20).¹⁵

In the same manner, while in the closing verses of the romance, he mentions a lay, he by no means says that that Breton lai—a musical piece made to be sung to a tune—is identical with the story he has just told us; in fact, his words imply the reverse.

595 Harpours in Bretaine afterþan
Herd, hou þis mervaille bigan,
And made herof a lay of gode likeing
And nempned it after þe king:

599 þat lay Orfeo is yhote,
Gode is þe lay, swete is þe note.¹⁶

The author of *Sir Orfeo* makes here the same careful distinction between the tale (‘conte’ or ‘aventure’) and the Breton lai that Marie had made in *Guigemar*¹⁷ and others of her lays (al-

¹⁵ The next two lines in F: “Ac herkneth lordinges sothe to sain | Ichil you telle Layle Frain” are obviously a translation of the opening lines of Marie’s lai: “Le lai del Fraïne vus dirai | sulunc le cunte que jeo sai.”

¹⁶ These lines are lacking in H, but are found both in A and O. Cf. Kittredge, p. 177, n. 2.

¹⁷ *Guigemar*, ll. 19-21: Les contes que jo sai verais, | dunt li Bretun unt fait les lais, | vos conterai assez briefment. Cf. ll. 883-884: De cest cunte qu’oï avez | fu Guigemar li lais trovez.

though not in all of them). For the passage under discussion the text of F seems therefore to give the best reading.¹⁸

We are now in a better position to notice and discuss another confusion for which this time the scribes are not responsible, for it must have taken place already in the French original.¹⁹ The author of *Orphée* had certainly distinguished between the ‘aventure’ and the ‘lai’: this distinction, together with sundry information on the old Bretons, he had of course borrowed from Marie. The consequence is that, wherever in his prologue we catch, as it were, an echo of Marie, we notice that ‘lay’ means *song* and nothing else (ll. 1-4: H, O, F; ll. 13-20 F, cf. ll. 15-24 H).²⁰ But in ll. 5-12 (substantially the same in the three manuscripts), which do not come from the *Lais*, we meet with a rather different conception. Here the author wanted to give his readers an idea of the subjects which the harpers of old sang in their lays; no easy task, we may believe, for a man of the thirteenth century; one had scarcely then an opportunity to listen to a genuine Breton lay. The best way out of the difficulty was perhaps to turn for information to the rather numerous so-called (French) lays which claimed to tell, with more or less fidelity, the adventures out of which the Bretons had made their lays. And there can be little doubt that in lines 5-12 our author refers us, not to the original Breton lays, but to the works of Marie, Renaut and to the anonymous lays:

5 Sum ben of wele und sum of wo,
And sum of joy and merþe also,
Sum of trechery and sum of gyle,
And sum of happes, þat fallen by whyle,
9 Sum of bourdys and sum of rybaudry,
And sum þer ben of þe feyre.

¹⁸ An examination of the first lines of O for this passage confirms our interpretation. But towards the end of it the scribe falls into the same blunder as the copyist of H: þat in þe leys ben *iwrouȝt* | Fyrst fond and forþe *brouȝt* | of aventours þat fell some deys | þe Bretonys þerof made þer leys | Off kynges þat before us were, | When þey myȝt any woundres here | þey lete þem *wryte* as it were do, | And þer among is sir Orfowo (ll. 13-20). The end is obviously shortened.

¹⁹ At the same time it sufficiently accounts for the blunder of the scribe of H.

²⁰ See the passages of Marie made use of by the author of *Orphée* in the article of Zupitza already quoted.

Off alle þing þat men may se,
Moost o lowe forsoþe þey be.

To be sure, one cannot sum up in more felicitous terms the contents of the *French* lays.²¹ But it is obvious that we are getting rather far from the Bretons; nobody at the time of Marie would have dreamed of ascribing to them songs of 'bourdys' and 'rybaudry'; surely the poetess would have denied the charge most indignantly. We must wait many years before we can find in the authors of *Ignauze*, *Lecheor* and *Nabaret* men ready to agree on this point with our ingenious *trouvère*. Of course, by thus going for his examples of Breton lays to collections of French tales, he ran the risk of mixing up quite different things; he was almost inevitably led to assign to the latter a name which by right belonged only to the former:

- 3 *þe layes þat ben of harpyng*
Ben yfounde of frely thing.
Sum ben of wele and sum of wo . . .
9 *Sum of bourdys and sum of rybaudry.*

It must be said at once, that this confusion is not peculiar to our author; it was made in his own time by more than one lay-writer. As a matter of fact, it can be traced back to Marie herself. While in the oldest of her tales, *Guigemar*, and in some others, she kept carefully apart the two notions of 'tale' written for readers and 'lai' sung to a tune, there is no doubt but that in several others she inclined to call her own tale a *lai* as well as the real or pretended original Breton song. Contradictions and hesitations such as these rather puzzled her imitators in the following age. Some consistently maintained the distinction between 'tale' and 'lay' to the end; others, more or less consciously or willingly, failed to perceive or keep up that distinction, and thereby contributed to assign to the word 'lai,' the only sense of which, up to Marie's time, had been song, a new meaning, that of short narrative poem on a subject connected with the 'matière de Bretagne.'²² The lost *lai d'Orphée*, we may now

²¹ It is, therefore, quite fitting that W. Hertz should have opened his collection of lays in his *Spielmanns Buch* by a rendering of *Sir Orfeo*. But whether our prologue was actually meant by its author to be the introduction to a large collection of lays, as Mr. Brugger suggests in *Zts. f. fr. Spr. u. Litt.*, xx, 154, n. 103, is doubtful.

²² On this point, see *Zts. f. rom. Phil.*, xxix, 299 ff.

conclude, had certainly its share in that most curious development, and in any study of the evolution of the lai (the word and the thing) must be mentioned and discussed by the side of *Doon*, *Lecheor* and *Tyolet*. English literature, too, as we know, welcomed, for a time, that novel use of an old word, and it is not absurd to suppose that the English translation of *Orphée*, our *Sir Orfeo*, had a good deal to do with that departure from tradition.

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SHAKESPEARE, *Tempest* 2. 2. 28.

Malone, on *R. and J.* 1. 1. 37, defined 'Poor John' as 'hake, dried, and salted,' and is followed by all the editions and dictionaries that I have examined. The definition is inaccurate in two respects: 'Poor John' was not hake, and it was not salted. The proof is furnished by Captain John Smith, especially in his *Description of New England*. In the edition of 1624 (Arber, *English Scholar's Library* 16. 709) he says: 'How many thousands this fiftie or sixty yeeres [1564-1614 or 1624] haue beene maintained by *New found land*, where they take nothing but small Cod, whereof the greatest they make Cor-fish, and the rest is hard dried, which we call Poore-Iohn, would amaze a man with wonder.'

To this corresponds, in the edition of 1616 (Arber, p. 195): '*New found Land*, doth yearly fraught neere 800 sayle of Ships with a sillie leane skinny Poore-Iohn, and Corfish; which at least yearly amounts to 3 or 400000 pound.'

That it was dried, and not salted, is shown by various considerations. (1) It is said to be 'hard dried' (see above). (2) In a list of fish (Arber, pp. 239, 255, 745) we have: 'Herring, Salt-fish, poore Iohn,' etc.; and (pp. 238, 254, 743): 'Salt-fish, poore Iohn, Salmons,' etc. (3) Smith says (p. 198; cf. p. 713): 'In the end of August, September, October, and Nouember, you haue Cod againe, to make Cor fish, or Poore Iohn: and each hundred [fish] is as good as two or three hundred in the *Newfound Land*: so that halfe the labour in hooking, splitting, and turning